

## Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 PM-03 NSC-07 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 NIC-01 SP-02

PRS-01 DRC-01 /058 W

----- 116848

R 191535Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9752

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 9900

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: LE, PINT

SUBJECT: IMAM MUSA AS-SADR

RE BEIRUT 9306.

1. DURING SMALL DINNER ARRANGED WITH MUSA AS-SADR EVENING AUGUST 18, LATTER REVEALED STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST VIEWS. WAS CRITICAL OF LEBANESE GOVERNMENT BUT NOT OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE. IS STILL ATTEMPTING TO COOPERATE WITH CERTAIN LEBANESE LEADERS. POSSESSES REMARKABLY GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAEL'S PROBLEMS. FAVORS U.S.-PALESTINIAN CONTACTS IN HOPE THAT THESE WOULD STRENGTHEN MODERATE ELEMENTS. HE CONSIDERS SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD SINCERELY STRIVING FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION. THOUGH NOT COMMENTING ON SITUATION IN IRAN, WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF IRAQI/BAATHIST RULE. STILL WANTS VERY MUCH TO VISIT U.S. BUT IS VAGUE AS TO TIMING. END SUMMARY.

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2. DINED LAST EVENING, AUGUST 18, WITH IMAM MUSA

AS-SADR AT HOME OF SHI'A BEIRUT LAWYER. ONLY OTHER PERSON PRESENT WAS IMAM'S COUSIN AND INTERPRETER, HUSSEIN. THREE HOUR CONVERSATION DEVOTED PRACTICALLY EXCLUSIVELY TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLITICS. IMAM SPOKE MOST ELOQUENTLY AGAINST COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY, STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. HE ALLEGED THAT AS OF THE MOMENT HAS HAS ARRESTED COMMUNIST INROADS AMONG IMPOVERISHED SHI'A AND CONTRARY TO WHEN I SAW HIM LAST APRIL, HE WAS RELATIVELY RELAXED, STATING THAT THANKS TO GULF STATES AND SAUDI ASSISTANCE HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DIG SOME WELLS, BUILD SOME ROADS AND SCHOOLHOUSES, ETC. IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

3. RE PRESENT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, HE WAS MOST PESSIMISTIC, STATING CORRUPTION INCREASING GEOMETRICALLY AND GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AND PROGRAMMING DECREASING IN SIMILAR FASHION. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD NOT TAKE VIOLENT ACTION AND WAS CATEGORIC THAT HE COULD CONTROL HIS ASSOCIATES. I DID NOT, REPEAT NOT, PIN HIM DOWN ON WHETHER HE MIGHT GO ON HUNGER STRIKE IN A BEIRUT MOSQUE LATE IN SEPTEMBER AS HAS BEEN RUMORED BUT I RECEIVED THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED BETTER RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE. WHILE HE SPOKE IN MOST CONTEMPTUOUS TERMS OF PRESENT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, HE WAS RELATIVELY MODERATE IN HIS REFERENCES TO FRANGIE.

4. ON OVERALL REGIONAL POLITICS HE SPOKE APPRECIATIVELY OF OUR EFFORTS TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO ASSURE HIM THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD CONTINUE TO DEVOTE EVERY EFFORT TO PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. FOR A LEBANESE MUSLIM HE SHOWED REMARKABLE UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAEL'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND AT SOME LENGTH DESCRIBED A MEETING WITH ARAFAT DURING WHICH HE ALLEGED HE OBTAINED ARAFAT'S SOLEMN PROMISE THAT ARAFAT WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO PROHIBIT ANY TERRORIST INCURSIONS INTO ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. RE THE PALESTINIANS HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CONTACTS COULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH U.S. OFFICIALS WHICH WOULD BOLSTER ARAFAT'S POSITION OF MODERATION. SADR REFERRED TO "SEVERAL" CONVERSATIONS

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HE HAD HAD WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD AND EMPHASIZED HIS CONVICTION THAT ASSAD IS TOTALLY DEDICATED TO PEACE AT THIS TIME AND IS NOT REALLY CONCERNED RE ISRAELI WAR TALK. WE DID NOT REPEAT NOT DISCUSS ANYTHING IRANIAN BUT IMAM WAS BITTER IN HIS ATTACKS AGAINST CURRENT IRAQI BAAATHIST RULE. (HIS INTERPRETER AND CONFIDANTE, HUSSEIN, AN IRAQI THROWN OUT OF HIS COUNTRY, CHIMED IN THAT HIS WIFE AND TWO OTHER CLOSE RELATIVES WERE MURDERED BY

IRAQI BAATH.)

5. IMAM CURRENTLY CUTTING BROAD SWATH IN THE LEBANON AND IN BEIRUT. IN THE FORMER HE IS CONDUCTING NEARLY DAILY MEETINGS WITH SHI'A FAITHFUL, THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE BEKAA. IN BEIRUT HE IS MEETING CONSTANTLY WITH POLITICAL LEADERS, PRINCIPALLY MARONITE, AND SEVERAL OF THE LATTER HAVE TOLD ME THAT THERE IS A DEFINITE MARONITE PROGRAM TO SAVE THE IMAM FROM THE LEFT AND ASSIST HIM IN HIS CURRENT CAMPAIGN FOR REFORMS.

6. IMAM SHARES CONCERN OF OTHER LEBANESE RE CYPRUS. HE VIEWS IT NOT ONLY AS A DIVERSION OF THE SECRETARY'S AND THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION FROM THE MIDDLE EAST BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY AS A BREAKDOWN OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ORDER. IMAM OF COURSE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO WHETHER ISRAELIS, TAKING A PAGE FROM THE TURKISH BOOK, MIGHT SEIZE SOUTHERN LEBANON, WHICH WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI. I EMPHASIZED THAT PRESIDENT FORD REITERATED IN HIS RECENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE OUR STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON. HE DID NOT APPEAR AWARE THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD USED THESE TERMS AND APPEARED REASSURED.

7. WE DISCUSSED BRIEFLY IMAM'S TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES CONCERNING WHICH HE IS STILL MOST ENTHUSIASTIC BUT WHICH HE FINDS DIFFICULT TO INJECT INTO HIS CURRENT HEAVY PROGRAM. DATES, AND EVEN WHETHER HE CAN ABSENT HIMSELF FROM LEBANON DURING THE CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR, WERE LEFT UP IN THE AIR BUT HE SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER THIS MATTER ACTIVELY AND WOULD LET ME KNOW IN A WEEK OR SO. THE QUESTION OF WHEN OR WHETHER HE CAN VISIT OUR COUNTRY WILL BE DIRECTED THROUGH REGULAR CHANNELS TO CU/IV. GODLEY  
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## Message Attributes

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